Edinburgh

New College April 2. 1845.

Dear Brethren

Your letter was received by us with sincere gratification, and when read at one of our Saturday-morning meetings, was listened to with much interest. The pressing duties which necessarily devolve upon us towards the end of a session have prevented us from answering it sooner, but we now hasten to perform this duty, before our final separation for the summer takes place.

Before commenting on anything which you have said, let us first tell you of the changes which have taken place here since we last wrote. You no doubt heard of the division caused in our Society by the Disruption. One result of this was that both parties claimed the Missionary Library formerly at our disposal. These contending claims issued in a lawsuit, though this did not take place without opposition from one or two members of our Committee. Much as this was to be deplored, we were in a great measure compelled to it by our situation. Protracted through more than a year, the case was at last brought to a termination by a decision being given against us. The grounds on which this verdict was based were found in the fact of our having altered the constitution of the Society. This we were alleged to have done by the adoption of a new law, that law being — as you should be informed —

the recognition of True church principles.
The courts having thus denied us the name by which our society had so long been distinguished, we were obliged to assume another. The designation fixed upon was that of the "New College Miss[y] Association"; and at the same meeting when this was agreed upon, we determined to vacate the University and hold our future meetings in the Institution from which our name was derived. Soon after coming here, active steps were taken for the formation of a new Library, and in this attempt we have met with great success. Friends have supplied us with donations of books, and money has also been subscribed for the same purpose. Previous to this we had been chiefly employed in collecting funds for the liquidation of our law-expenses, and here too our endeavours have been crowned with success.
That our position in the University has been lost, we cannot but regret; with our books we have parted (as you may suppose) reluctantly; and the law expenses have pressed somewhat heavily upon us, but none of these things have so much grieved us as the surrender of our correspondence-book, containing the missives of dear friends during a considerable number of years.
Such then have been our secular employments, and though there is in them much to regret, many incidents have occurred which call for gratitude to God on our part.
Meantime, though these events were not without their attendant cares to all who were really interested in the society's welfare, we trust that they have not wholly engrossed our minds. By an arrangement entered into at the close of

last session, ten or twelve students were appointed to prepare essays on Missionary subjects during the summer vacation. Of these we have had so many, that owing to the occasional addresses of Ministers, and the communication of Missionary intelligence, they have not been all read. None have been unprofitable, and some have awakened in us those emotions of zeal for Jesus' cause, and interest in the spread of Gospel truth, which we could wish often revived in our languid breasts, and which are transient, only we fear, because there is so little in us capable of heartily responding to them.

Since last year two of our number have gone out to occupy the situations of pastors to colonial churches. One of our committee Mr Hislop has entered upon the missionary field at Nagpur in Central India. A letter from him, read not long ago at one of our meetings announced his progress from Bombay to his future home. His is to be the arduous task in a great measure of forming a mission there. We trust to hear of his success, and by reflecting on his situation, as well as that of every Christian soldier in this warfare, we would be stirred up to more urgent prayer for results which shall honour God, and exalt the enthroned Saviour before men.

About the commencement of this year a new Missionary association was begun by some students belonging to the United Secession church, a body of which you must have heard as having been in separation from the Church of Scotland for upwards of a century. To the few students who originated this society, others have since been added, till they can now number above forty as enrolled on their list of members. Of this rapid increase in their numbers, and of the cheering alacrity with which they were said to assemble together on

the Saturday evenings you may suppose that we have heard with much pleasure. Till lately however no public recognition of each other had been made by our respective societies. This was put an end to in a way at which we could not but rejoice, by a deputation from our friends of the secession appearing at one of our public meetings a few weeks ago. It did not require their assurances of friendship and of desire for a spirit of union between us, to gain our hearty good-will and fellow-feeling for them as embarked in the same high cause. Still the expression of these in a public manner was not without its good effects, and we trust that the brotherly tie thus early uniting us with them may not only be confirmed as years roll on, but may enable us to effect more for Missions than we could have accomplished if not in the bonds of a fraternal intercourse with them. Even should a generous, and chastened (because sacred) rivalry exist between us, the result we may humbly anticipate, will be for good.

Perhaps we should not omit to mention the recent visit of a French protestant clergyman to our city, on a special mission to the Free church, and other dissenting bodies. The object of Monsr Narziat is to take over to France with him a number of Scottish youths, especially the sons of Free church Ministers, though others are not rejected. These he proposes to educate at a very cheap rate, and, as far as we understand, he does not hesitate to avow his intention of endeavouring so to interest them in the cause of France, and French religion, that if themselves Christians, they may consent, and not only consent, but desire to remain as pastors or evangelists in the Protestant church there. The scheme is rather a bold one,

it is certainly novel, but as far as we can see, there is nothing objectionable in it. One thought occurs to us however that as the French are generally allowed to be constitutionally best adapted for being missionaries, it must surely be from an absolute paucity of candidates for the ministry that such a plan is resorted to. But, be this as it may, we pray for a blessing upon the endeavour if it be in accordance with the mind of the Spirit.

Although not desirous of prolonging an argument which the annual interchange of letters affords such slender means of sustaining, and far less, of terminating, we cannot conclude at this time without adverting to your views on the Slavery question. It is but a short time since this matter was discussed by the Edin^r^ Free church Presbytery, in so far, at least as it bore upon the question of their body determining or refusing to hold communication with the churches of your slave-holding states. Perhaps you may be aware that the proceedings terminated in a resolution to adopt the former course. Not improbably too, you may think Dr Cunninghame's speech (if you have chanced to see it) which then and there decided the matter, an exponent of our opinion generally. In one point, you and he, and all of us (we regret to say) agree, in wishing slavery brought to an end. But you think it consonant with the spirit (no that you cannot surely maintain) or at least, not explicitly denounced in the precepts, of Christianity. Still less is war. Would you therefore uphold it as Christian. "Still less," we say, for while there is no express command against war in the New Testament, Paul, in 1^st^ Tim 1: 9-10, expressly asserts

that the law is made for "men-stealers," ~~[illegible]~~ and classes such among those who commit the most heinous crimes. We will say no more at present, but content ourselves with urging you to read (if the volume have crossed the Atlantic) the third of Isaac Taylors four lectures delivered in London at the request of the City-mission there in 1842.

Wherein we agree on this question, let us encourage, wherein we differ, let us pray for each other that the light of truth may shine into our hearts. But whether agreeing or differing, we trust that no declaration of our views will prevent you from regarding us as as truly yours in the bonds of brotherly & Christian affection. In name of the New College Miss. Assoc.

Dan. Macfarlan Sec.

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Rev Abm Cosman

Secretary of Missionary Society

Theological Seminary

Princeton United States